

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☒ (6-12)

☒ Charter ☒ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Mark Dibella

Official School Name: YES Preparatory - North Central Campus

School Mailing Address:

13701 Aldine-Westfield Rd  
Houston, TX 77039-0001

County: Harris State School Code Number\*: 101845101

Telephone: (281) 227-2044 Fax: (281) 227-2090

Web site/URL: www.yesprep.org E-mail: stephanie.jones@yesprep.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Christopher Barbic

District Name: YES Preparatory Public Schools Tel: (713) 574-7600

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Robert Casey

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Other  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **5 TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9849

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 10162

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☒ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

\_\_\_\_\_ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	7	73	67	140
K			0	8	57	63	120
1			0	9	58	63	121
2			0	10	26	52	78
3			0	11	17	27	44
4			0	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6	76	82	158				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							661

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: \_\_\_\_\_ % American Indian or Alaska Native  
 \_\_\_\_\_ % Asian  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 % Black or African American  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 95 % Hispanic or Latino  
 \_\_\_\_\_ % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 % White  
 \_\_\_\_\_ % Two or more races  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **100 % Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 0 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	2
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	559
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.004
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	0.358

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

Note: YES Prep Public Schools has not previously tracked the "total number of limited English proficient students" and has also not received funding for this subgroup.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 83 %

Total number students who qualify: 550

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 6 %

Total Number of Students Served: 40

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>42</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Support staff	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>51</u>	<u>7</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 16 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	99%	98%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	17%	8%	5%	20%	29%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

North Central adds a grade level each year until the school reaches 12th grade. In 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 the instructional staff was much smaller than it is today. Consequently, when as few as one teacher left it had a significant impact on the overall teacher turnover rate. Three teachers were asked to leave in 2007-2008. Without those teachers the turnover rate for 2007-2008 is below 15%. It is also important to note that North Central recruits young leaders who generally commit two years to the education movement, which has a cyclical impact on the turnover rate. Generally, most teachers who leave North Central do so at the leadership's direct request or to pursue an advanced degree, join the Peace Corps, or for another non-teaching related reason. Most do not go on to teach at another school.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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YES Prep North Central (North Central) was founded on the simple premise that low-income students can achieve at the same academic levels as their peers in more affluent neighborhoods when given access to similar opportunities and resources. The school is part of YES Prep Public Schools (District), a free, open-enrollment public charter school system. North Central was opened in 2003 as the District's first expansion school. Its mission is to increase the number of low-income Houstonians who graduate from a four-year college prepared to compete in the global marketplace and committed to improving disadvantaged communities.

North Central is located in an urban fringe of Houston, Texas. The District specifically locates schools in communities where the median annual income is below \$30,000 and the vast majority of the student population attends public schools that are consistently rated *Unacceptable* or *Acceptable* by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Not surprisingly, the TEA has labeled North Central students "at-risk." A majority of the school's students are Hispanic and African American (99%) and are from low-income families (83%). Most students enter North Central at least one grade level behind in math and reading; and 88% are first-generation college-bound. The odds of success are stacked high against North Central students.

Whatever It Takes, this is North Central's motto—and exemplifies the school's unyielding commitment to excellence. Unlike a typical high school, North Central mandates that every senior earn acceptance to a four-year college in order to graduate. The school follows a unique, integrated 6th-12th grade educational model that includes an extended school day, mandatory Saturday and summer school classes, a rigorous college prep curriculum, spring college research trips, and an intensive and personalized college counseling program. All North Central students, teachers, and parents share the following core values:

- We are committed to achieving excellent results through constant improvement. Every year, students, teachers, and parents sign a contract that says they will do *Whatever It Takes* to pursue the North Central mission of college graduation.
- We are committed to building positive relationships. North Central has developed a distinctive student support model that includes small faculty advising groups, social services, tutoring sessions, and a college counseling department that begins working with students in the 9th grade. Teachers also receive school-sponsored cell phones so that they are accessible to students outside traditional school hours.
- We are committed to creating opportunities that would not otherwise exist. Students participate in week-long spring college research trips, monthly field lessons, and stimulating summer programs.
- We are committed to achieving social justice. "YES" is an acronym for "Youth Engaged in Service." Students complete monthly service projects in the local community and log hundreds of volunteer hours over their seven years at North Central. These experiences ensure that students will become future leaders who understand the importance of civic responsibility and will themselves be committed to improving disadvantaged communities.

North Central has repeatedly been rated an *Exemplary* school by the TEA. The school has been included on the *Texas Business and Education Coalition's Honor Roll* list for the past two years. North Central is also an International Baccalaureate (IB) candidate school. Upon approval, North Central will become the only 6th-12th grade IB school in Houston.

At North Central, students, teachers, and parents take pride in *our* accomplishments, but we also remind each other to maintain the humility and focus that brought us from a warehouse serving 100 students to a fully grown out middle and high school serving over 800 students.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. **Assessment Results:**

North Central received the highest academic performance rating, Exemplary, from the TEA in 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008, and was rated Recognized in 2005.

**TAKS Reading/English.** North Central students have performed at a consistently high level. No significant gains or losses are noted. For each grade level, over 90% of students achieved a passing rate on the state exams. The disaggregated data (by economic status and race) shows that there are no significant increases or dips by subgroups. In 2007, the Reading scores dropped below 90% passing among only one subgroup: African-American students in Grade 9. It is important to note, however, that this grade level/subgroup was composed of only seven students and, ultimately, six of the seven students passed the TAKS exam (86%).

**TAKS Mathematics.** North Central students have performed at a consistently high level. No significant gains or losses are noted. For each grade level, in four of the last five years, over 90% of students achieved a passing rate on the state exams. In 2005, 84% of the students in Grade 6 passed; however, that number rose considerably the following year and has remained above 90%. The disaggregated data (by economic status and race) shows that there are no significant increases or dips by subgroups. In 2005, the Math scores dropped among only two subgroups: African American students in Grades 6 (78%) and 7 (67%). It is important to note, however, that these grade levels/subgroups were composed of only 35 students combined. In subsequent years, the number of students tested in these subgroups dropped to a number too low to draw conclusions.

On the TAKS, the percentage of correct answers needed to pass the exams changes annually and varies by content area. For example, in the most recent testing year (2007-08), the following percentages were set as the “Passing Level” on the Reading exam for Grades 6 through 10: 64%, 69%, 69%, 62%, and 60%, respectively. The percentages needed to pass the Math exam for Grades 6 through 10 were lower: 63%, 56%, 60%, 60%, and 61%, respectively. In order to receive “Commended Performance,” students had to score at least a 90% on the exam. More information can be accessed online at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>.

### 2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Students attending North Central take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) standardized test. North Central uses assessment data to improve performance in three primary ways:

To determine focused-tutorial groups during the school day and on Saturdays. Teachers and students are divided into tutorial groups during the year based on the students’s benchmark exams. Students change groups each time a new benchmark is administered and exit the groups when appropriate. Students also receive small group instruction on Saturdays. Teachers also provide methods for moving students from the “Passing Level” score to the “College Readiness” score.

To deliver specific professional development for teachers. Once a week teachers engage in discussions and activities that focus on student-centered learning and backwards planning for unit design. Teachers also share techniques with their colleagues that are particularly helpful in addressing the state exam objectives. For example, teachers often share methods for how they involve students in tracking their own performance and setting their own goals.

To identify consistency between the TAKS exams and the internal, more rigorous district assessments. The data from the TAKS exams helps North Central better design, review, and update the district assessment process. North Central recognizes that the state exam is a minimum skills test; therefore, the school ensures



that the district exams meet the TAKS objectives while also exceeding those lower standards to better prepare students for college.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

North Central communicates the results of standardized exams to parents, students, and community stakeholders throughout the school year.

Any information distributed to parents is written in both English and Spanish. Parents of struggling students are invited to a face-to-face meeting with teachers, and at least one of those teachers is always able to provide Spanish translation. Parents are also invited to an end of the year meeting to review their child's progress on the exams, as well as their class grades and disciplinary record. Parents are informed about the exams through the weekly Parent Notes. The Notes include logistical information and strategic points for student success.

Every nine weeks, students receive information about their progress on individual standards on the exam. The practice benchmark exam results are explained to students. Students are also informed of their progress throughout the year so that they are able to track their improvement. The norm-referenced tests are shared with the students. For example, in Reading, students are able to cross reference their standardized exam score with other Reading fluency exams. Together these scores present parents with a holistic view of their child's performance.

The community has access to North Central's TAKS results through the local newspaper, the school's website, the TEA's website, and articles from national magazines, such as Newsweek and US News and World Report. North Central posts its exam results in the hallways and on the announcement board at the school. The Exemplary rating is also discussed frequently at school assemblies, grade-level meetings, and small group advisory meetings.

### **4. Sharing Success:**

The staff at North Central is committed to sharing its successes and best practices with the other four schools in the District. This year, the District created a new position, District Content Specialist (DCS). Three of the four DCSs are North Central core-subject teachers. The role of the DCS is to facilitate content-specific communications between the teachers at all of the District schools. Moreover, DCSs are responsible for all aspects of the district-wide assessments, including coordinating the creation, administration, and evaluation of the assessments. The assessments are administered to the District's more than 2,600 students on five campuses. In view of the fact that three North Central teachers serve as DCSs, and given that those teachers have a direct impact on the more than 200 teachers currently employed by the District, North Central has a vested interest in sharing its successes and best practices with its sister schools.

North Central is also committed to sharing its successes and best practices with its collaborative partners, such as the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Teach For America (TFA). One of North Central's sister schools is housed inside an HISD school. Seventy-five percent of the staff members at North Central are affiliated with TFA. Presently, TFA has over 400 corps members in HISD classrooms, which offers another strategic means for North Central to impact HISD. North Central serves as a summer placement site for the training of 100 TFA corps members. Furthermore, North Central hosts monthly professional development opportunities for the Houston TFA corps, and six North Central teachers serve as TFA Content Specialists and are thereby responsible for the professional growth of teachers across the greater Houston area.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

District common assessments drive instruction and ensure rigorous curricula at North Central. Incorporating Pre-AP, AP, state expectations, and district standards guarantees that students are prepared for success in college.

Teachers utilize common assessments, long-term plans, and diagnostic data to plan units. Teachers also identify the essential knowledge and skills students need to master; design rigorous assessments by objective; and push students to think critically through unit essential questions, objective tracking, and various formative and summative assessments. Project-based learning further allows teachers to integrate across content areas and challenge students at an appropriate level through well-developed rubrics. Daily instruction is centered on concrete, measurable objectives for student achievement. Teachers use a variety of student-centered strategies to engage students and accommodate diverse learning styles.

English/Reading. Teachers incorporate the Reading and Writing Workshop model into their middle school English language arts curricula, and cater mini lessons to the needs of their students and utilize individual conferences to ensure understanding of reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar objectives. As students advance, they are challenged to write analytical essays based on texts, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* (8th grade), *Romeo and Juliet* (9th), and *Catcher in the Rye* (10th). Offerings: AP English Literature (11th) and AP English Language (12th).

Mathematics. The program is designed to ensure that every student is successful in math regardless of whether they plan to major in math. It emphasizes logic and the writing of definitions and proofs; teachers value the metacognitive process over the correct solution to a problem. Students learn the importance of being able to communicate their thoughts, defend their answer, and challenge each other in the process. After 105 minutes of daily math instruction in 6th and 7th grade, students are placed in either an 8th grade math class or Algebra I. Subsequent course sequence: Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Pre-Calculus and Physics, and then AP Calculus. The goals: 100% of students will successfully complete Pre-Calculus and 60% will successfully complete AP Calculus.

Science. Teachers strive to develop scientific thinkers. Students communicate their knowledge using mathematical concepts and scientific language; understand the process of trial and error in conducting experiments; and examine how important risk taking and failure are for innovation. Students frequently reflect on their learning in journals and lab reflections for real world application. Course sequence: Biology (9th), Chemistry (10th), Integrated Physics and Pre-Calculus (11th), and AP Biology (12th).

Humanities. The program provides students with a fundamental understanding of history, and challenges them to use learned concepts and observe the importance of those concepts in current domestic and international affairs. Through layered curriculum projects, debates, Socratic seminars, research projects, simulated scenarios, and other instruction strategies, students think critically about the impact of key historical periods and the potential future application of lessons learned. Course sequence: World History (6th), Texas History (7th), American History (8th), World Geography (9th), AP World History (10th), AP American History (11th), and AP Government (12th).

Foreign Language. Students begin with introductory Spanish (6th), followed by Spanish I, II, and III (prerequisites for AP Spanish Language). After passing the AP Spanish Language exam, students take Pre-AP Spanish Literature and AP Spanish Literature.

Technology and The Arts. Students take at least 50 hours every year. In the lower level technology courses students learn the basics of Microsoft Office. In high school, students enroll in Video-Production I and II, where they produce TV shows, design podcasts, and create and sell the video yearbook. The arts introduces middle school students to basic art, theater, and dance techniques, leading to more advanced courses, such as Dance II, Theater II, Art II, and Speech in high school.

## **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

Sixth grade students enter North Central at least one grade level behind in reading, and continue to struggle throughout middle and high school to reach reading proficiency. Consequently, North Central has implemented Reading and Writing Workshop, established a central school library, and started formally assessing every student's reading level.

North Central identified Workshop as a model that fostered differentiated instruction. Students are able to work independently while learning and applying literacy objectives. This year, North Central implemented the Workshop model in 6th-8th grade. The first unit in 9th grade is also based on Workshop to ensure that students are motivated and prepared for higher level literature. English is taught over two class periods in all grade levels, allowing for greater gains. The 6th and 7th grade classes are team-taught so that students receive additional one-on-one instruction.

The Workshop model also develops students as life-long readers and writers. Teachers use formal reading level assessments to help students set reading growth goals. To gauge students' attitudes toward literacy, North Central created an attitudinal literacy survey, which is administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Teachers also hold themselves accountable for quality workshop instruction using an observation survey form.

North Central has opened a centralized library. Although the English teachers had small classroom libraries, the department jointly decided that students needed a wider variety of books and research materials. Students also collected book donations and fundraised. Currently, the library has 6,200 books in circulation, and is aiming for a collection of 10,000 high interest, fiction and non-fiction books. The school is also fundraising for student computers, online journals, and research materials.

Several of North Central's strategies for accommodating struggling readers are in the first year of implementation; however, students are already reporting more enthusiasm for reading and writing.

## **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

North Central's unique, integrated 6th-12th grade model has allowed the school to build a vertically aligned curriculum in math; one that creates a math foundation in 6th grade and progresses upwards to college readiness in 12th grade. The school's math goals are that 100% of students will complete Pre-Calculus and 60% will complete AP Calculus. By focusing on these goals, North Central can work backwards in the design of its courses so that students are prepared to meet the challenge.

The math teachers have created standardized assessments for all of North Central's courses. The exams have undergone statistical analyses to ensure their reliability and validity with the student population. The assessments follow a format very similar to the AP Calculus exam: a multiple choice section with five answer choices and a free response section with questions that address both basic skills and higher-order thinking skills.

The math teachers have also agreed to collaborate in the grading of the assessments. All teachers block off one day to grade the free response section together and use a common rubric. Thus, teachers are able to provide objective feedback to students and better identify problem areas.

Teachers have also agreed to standardize the grading system with a five-point scale similar to the one used by the College Board. Using this grading system, teachers now have a standard frame of reference to highlight student achievement regardless of the course. For example, teachers can focus on students earning a 1 for tutorials and remediation, while having confidence that students earning a 4 or a 5 are on track for success in AP Calculus.

The creation of vertically aligned assessments, improved collaboration, and standardization of the grading system has provided a clear path for teachers and students to monitor progress and achieve North Central's ambitious mission.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

North Central believes that every child, if given equal access, can excel academically. The school serves an economically disadvantaged population, and the majority of incoming students are at least one grade level behind. Nevertheless, North Central guarantees that every graduating senior will be accepted to a four-year college. Therefore, teachers must constantly differentiate and offer one-on-one instruction, extension, and remediation to students.

North Central employs the following instructional methods (only briefly described) to ensure that all students meet their educational goals:

***Reading and Writing Workshop:*** Students in 6th-9th grade participate in workshops where they are taught real-world applicable mini-lessons. Teacher talk time is minimal. The focus is on students doing the real work of readers and writers. Students self-select books on their reading and interest level, and are coached to improve their reading level and use reading strategies. Students also write pieces on topics of their choice and are guided through writing conferences to reach and exceed their writing potential.

***Math Lab:*** Students in 6th and 7th grade attend a Math Lab each day where they receive differentiated practice and instruction in math concepts. Students advance at their own pace, asking for teacher direction when needed.

***Project-Based Learning:*** All classes use project-based learning and push students to apply their knowledge to real world projects.

***Rubrics:*** Students at North Central are accustomed to using rubrics to assess themselves and their peers. Students are able to differentiate their own learning by studying the indicators on the rubric and determining their own level of achievement.

***Unit Essential Questions:*** Each unit is designed around an open-ended question with a real world connection that links all unit elements together and forces critical thinking.

#### **5. Professional Development:**

North Central understands that professional development and student achievement are connected. Every Wednesday, the department heads lead three-hour professional development sessions where staff are trained on various topics, such as how to analyze the TAKS benchmark data to ensure objective-driven remediation during tutorials. Department heads also use this and other time to address two major professional development goals:

To increase the rigor of unit summative assessments (traditional and project-based). Teachers design summative assessments with the assistance of the District Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Dean of

Instruction, department heads, and other district instructional leaders. Department heads lead discussions in their respective departments critiquing and evaluating these assessments using established North Central assessment rubrics. The rubrics ensure purposeful and rigorous assessment activities that accurately reflect student understanding of the central objectives of each unit. Teachers then revise assessments as necessary before distributing them to the students. The goal is that every teacher will have at least one summative assessment with a “Proficient” or “Mastery” rating by the end of the year and that every teacher will also have concrete examples of rigorous assessments to guarantee that all students are pushed to think critically.

To adequately prepare teachers to be part of an authorized IB school. All teachers are currently involved in staff development for the implementation of the IB Middle Years Programme. It is a structured inquiry method that includes a holistic understanding of interrelated themes and essential elements focused on developing the whole child. Utilizing common unit essential questions across content areas solidifies student understanding of material. Encouraging international-mindedness, character education through the IB Learner profile, and authentic real world connections engages students in the material and ultimately affects overall student achievement.

## **6. School Leadership:**

The leadership structure at North Central is organized to ensure that communication of policies, programs, and instruction remains focused on campus goals and the mission of preparing students for success in college. Every Monday, the School Director meets with the administrative team, which is comprised of the Principal, the Dean of Instruction, the Operations Manager, the Director of College Counseling, and the International Baccalaureate Coordinator. In these meetings, the School Director asks team members to report accomplishments from the previous week and share three to five projects they will strive to complete during the upcoming week. The School Director then solicits input on school-wide issues that directly impact student achievement, such as the plans for upcoming professional development, how to address results from a student survey, or how to continue to strengthen staff culture. Once topics have been fully discussed and closure is reached, attendees have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions.

Members of the administrative staff conduct meetings with their own teams later in the week. The Principal meets with the grade level chairs, the Dean of Instruction and International Baccalaureate Coordinator meet with the department heads, the Operations Manager meets with the front office staff, and the Director of College Counseling meets with the college counseling team. The division of responsibilities and shared leadership cultivates investment and a mutual commitment to students. The leadership structure capitalizes on the strengths of individuals and ensures that all staff members are aligned and focused on their contributions to student achievement. The leadership structure encourages administrators to carry out the school vision and staff members are motivated to be detail-oriented with both instructional and administrative responsibilities. This approach fosters a positive staff and student culture that allows North Central to provide a quality education for all students.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 10 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr				
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	98				
Commended	48				
Number of students tested	48				
Percent of total students tested	100				
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	100				
Commended	58				
Number of students tested	26				
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	98				
Commended	50				
Number of students tested	44				
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 10 in 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr				
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	100				
Commended	37				
Number of students tested	49				
Percent of total students tested	100				
Number of students alternatively assessed	0				
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0				
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	100				
Commended	22				
Number of students tested	27				
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	100				
Commended	38				
Number of students tested	45				
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 10 in 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year:  
2004/2005/2006/2007/2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	93	96	91	84	95
Commended	61	51	38	32	36
Number of students tested	127	119	115	108	83
Percent of total students tested	96	97	97	96	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	3	4	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	3	4	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	92	90	90	99	95
Commended	60	38	38	26	38
Number of students tested	113	97	97	80	63
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	93	97	91	86	95
Commended	61	51	38	20	35
Number of students tested	122	111	107	197	72
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended				78	99
Commended				20	33
Number of students tested				35	10
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The 2004-2005 "Number of students tested" data in the subgroups is based on overall school data; grade-level data is unavailable.



Subject: Reading

Grade: Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)  
6

Edition/Publication Year:  
2004/2005/2006/2007/2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	94	97	97	94	95
Commended	47	52	34	43	25
Number of students tested	127	118	115	108	83
Percent of total students tested	96	97	97	96	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	3	4	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	3	4	1
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	93	99	99	99	95
Commended	43	35	35	21	24
Number of students tested	114	97	97	80	63
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	93	97	97	97	94
Commended	48	50	34	38	26
Number of students tested	122	111	107	197	72
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended				89	99
Commended				40	22
Number of students tested				35	10
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The 2004-2005 "Number of students tested" data in the subgroups is based on overall school data; grade-level data is unavailable.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year:  
2005/2006/2007/2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	98	94	99	96	
Commended	30	26	25	26	
Number of students tested	114	101	85	74	
Percent of total students tested	93	96	99	99	
Number of students alternatively assessed	8	4	1	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	4	1	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	97	94	99	96	
Commended	30	26	23	26	
Number of students tested	101	90	75	80	
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	97	94	100	98	
Commended	30	23	25	20	
Number of students tested	118	95	80	197	
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended				67	
Commended				20	
Number of students tested				35	
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 7 in 2003-2004. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

The 2004-2005 "Number of students tested" data in the subgroups is based on overall school data; grade-level data is unavailable.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year:  
2005/2006/2007/2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	91	91	98	99	
Commended	30	22	18	23	
Number of students tested	114	101	85	74	
Percent of total students tested	93	97	99	99	
Number of students alternatively assessed	8	3	1	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	3	1	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	89	91	97	99	
Commended	29	21	19	21	
Number of students tested	100	89	75	80	
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	91	91	98	99	
Commended	29	21	16	38	
Number of students tested	118	95	80	197	
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended				99	
Commended				40	
Number of students tested				35	
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 7 in 2003-2004. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

The 2004-2005 "Number of students tested" data in the subgroups is based on overall school data; grade-level data is unavailable.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8

Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2006/2007/2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	98	93	96		
Commended	42	35	28		
Number of students tested	110	83	57		
Percent of total students tested	96	99	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	1	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	100	93	98		
Commended	45	34	32		
Number of students tested	96	71	42		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	98	94	96		
Commended	42	34	29		
Number of students tested	107	77	52		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 8 in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2006/2007/2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	99	100	100		
Commended	50	54	70		
Number of students tested	112	83	57		
Percent of total students tested	100	99	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	99	100	100		
Commended	48	52	66		
Number of students tested	94	71	42		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	99	100	100		
Commended	50	50	71		
Number of students tested	105	77	52		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 8 in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

Subject: Mathematics                      Grade: 9      Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2007/2008      Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	95	93			
Commended	52	36			
Number of students tested	91	69			
Percent of total students tested	99	100			
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	94	93			
Commended	55	39			
Number of students tested	65	57			
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	96	94			
Commended	52	39			
Number of students tested	84	62			
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 9 in 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 9

Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Edition/Publication Year: 2007/2008

Publisher: Texas Education Agency (TEA)

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr			
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Commended	100	99			
Commended	68	69			
Number of students tested	92	70			
Percent of total students tested	99	99			
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1			
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1			
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Commended	100	98			
Commended	70	69			
Number of students tested	67	58			
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic</b>					
Commended	100	100			
Commended	69	71			
Number of students tested	86	62			
<b>3. (specify subgroup): African American</b>					
Commended					
Commended					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. (specify subgroup):</b>					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

North Central did not have a Grade 9 in 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006. The school adds a grade level each year until it reaches the 12th grade.